The Destination of Man

Dr. Alexis Carrel was born in France in 1873. After receiving higher education in Science (Medicine) in France, he went to the United States in 1905 to join the staff of Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research in New York and remained there for 30 years. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1912 for his contribution to the field of medicine. He died in 1944 in France.

Dr. Carrel's book titled, *Man the Unknown,* which was published in 1935 and reprinted on several occasions, was his most popular work. A commentator aptly says of it: "This book sums up much of his experience of man and his life seen from a purely scientific aspect."

But, as we learn from his 312-page book, Dr. Alexis Carrel failed to find the reality of human life. That is why he titled the book, *Man the Unknown.* A study of this book tells us that, so far as man as a scientific entity is concerned, he was, to a great extent, 'discovered' by Dr. Carrel. Then the question arises as to why he gave his book a title of this nature. This apparent confusion stems from the fact that although Dr. Carrel had 'discovered' man, his study did not lead him to any certain knowledge of man's 'destination'. He felt that a 'known' man was heading towards an 'unknown' destination.

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The truth is that what is unknown is not man, but rather his destination. A more apt title for his book might have been, "Man's Destination, the Unknown."

This is not a problem faced by Dr. Carrel alone. The same has been and still is true of all philosophers and thinkers. Although man has appeared to them to be a known entity, they have remained totally ignorant of his ultimate destination. It is this ideological vacuum between man and his 'destination', which shows us how mysterious, indeed, are the ways of God to man, so that, ultimately, nothing but bewilderment awaits him.

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Man is a perfectionist by birth. By nature, he wants a perfect existence, an eternal life, unlimited happiness, no obstacles, etc. He wants a world, which is the realization of human dreams. A world that is free from all contradictions. A world where man may lead his life with a sense of total fulfillment. He wants a perfect world, but despite all his efforts, he is fated to realize that finding a perfect world is an impossibility.

This apparently intractable issue becomes fully resolved when the study of man is made in the light of the Divine Scheme of things. That is to say, when efforts are made to understand the will or plan of the Creator along with an understanding of the creation. This is the only possible scientific method that is of any relevance. When we approach matters from this angle, we realize that this problem confronts us only because we attempt to understand man without keeping in mind the creation plan of God.

Man is a creation; he is not the Creator. Just as a machine is made by an engineer, it is not its own maker. This being so, if we want to know the reality of man, we have to learn about the creation plan of the Creator. Just as without the knowledge of the engineer's plan, we cannot explain the machine, similarly, without knowledge of the creation plan of the Creator, it is impossible to explain man. This is why, without keeping this creation plan in view, the meaning of man's life escapes us; whereas when we keep this creation plan firmly in view, everything becomes fully comprehensible. Everything falls into place.

What is God's Creation Plan?

Like everything else in this world, God created this world as one half of a pair. This world, in which we pass our lives after birth, is the first half and the other world where we will live after death is the other half. The Creator of man has thus created him as an eternal creature and has divided his life into two stages - the *pre-death period* or the limited life in this world and the *post death period* or the eternal life after death. The pre-death world is designed as a 'testing' ground, while the post-death world is designed to be a world of 'reward' or 'punishment'. The mistake made by philosophers and thinkers is that they seek the human destination in the present world, whereas it does not exist in this world at all.

> We must exercise our freedom in accordance with our will of their Creator.

Since the present world is made to serve the purpose of man's test, everyone here has been granted complete freedom to make his or her own moral choices. It is as if the present world were a kind of examination hall where all the provisions have been made that are needed for this test. But the perfect, ideal things needed for building a happy life do not exist here.

For everything here is in an incomplete and limited form. If man tries to seek happiness here, it would be like a student wanting to build his desired life within an examination hall. Just as the student will ultimately be overwhelmed with a sense of frustration if he tries to do so, in the same way any man, who tries to build his perfect world in a place where he is on trial, will also face frustration.

How should we live in this world?

So the question arises as to what men and women should do in this limited pre-death world in order to find the world of their desires in the eternal post-death world? The answer is that they must exercise their freedom in accordance with the will of their Creator. How does one do this? We do this by surrendering ourselves to divine discipline. That is to say that in spite of having been granted full freedom to flout it around if we so wish, we restrain ourselves, we develop a positive outlook; even in a negative situation, we treat others as we ourselves want to be treated.

To reward the people who surrender themselves to the divine discipline in the pre-death world, God has made a perfect world in the post-death eternal world called Paradise. Paradise is the world that has been created in keeping with man's perfection seeking nature. It is an ideal and perfect world in every respect, with no frustration, no problems, no aging, no illness — just eternal peace, bliss and happiness. God wants such men and women who qualify in their test in this limited world, according to the Divine standard to inhabit the ideal world of Paradise.

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Who then are these men and women who measure up to the divine standard? They are the ones who, by using their intellectual capabilities, attain the realization of God. They are those who discover the truth by tearing asunder the veil of mental confusion, who abandon all forms of worship in favour of the worship of the One True God and who then lead a divinely disciplined life. These are the criteria for earning Paradise according to the divine creation plan. Such men and women as come up to this standard will be ushered into the eternal world of Paradise after death, while those who fail to do so will be cast into eternal hellfire, where they will have nothing in store for them but eternal deprivation and frustration.

So, take stock of your life to see if you are availing this Divine opportunity. Make sure that you avail of your opportunity in this world in order that you may attain eternal peace in the next.

Blessed are those who are held deserving of choicest blessings of the Lord — that is, eternal Paradise — the final destination of a believing man.

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